

Dvorak Developments

Dvorak Developments #53 (Volume 15, #3) • "Fall 1988" (Published Spring 1989)

One last issue to follow

DvDv to Discontinue Publication

D*vorak Developments*, which has been continuously publishing since 1973, will discontinue publication after the next issue, which will be published this summer.

Freelance Communications, the publisher of *DvDv*, will continue to offer Dvorak information, including back issues of the newsletter, books, consulting, and the PCKey conversion program.

Paid subscribers with any issues remaining on their subscriptions after the last issue will be given credit toward any other Dvorak-related product that Freelance Communications offers. Those who don't want any of those products will be given a cash refund on request.

The details behind the decision are included in the *From the Editor's Keyboard* column below.

From the Editor's Keyboard

by Randy Cassingham

Decisions, Decisions

When I took over as editor of *Dvorak Developments*, my feeling as to the purpose of the newsletter was that it should help the Dvorak keyboard become a serious alternative to the Qwerty layout. It was to "keep the flame alive", if you will, during the Dvorak's grassroots stage. Once the Dvorak was well on its way to becoming accepted by a large number of people, the purpose of the newsletter would be fulfilled.

Unfortunately, this makes me face an important decision each year: is it time yet? Has the Dvorak movement gained enough momentum that the newsletter should cease? For the last few years, my answer has been *not yet; it is gaining a lot, but not yet*. This year, my answer became yes.

I have been tracking the advance of the Dvorak keyboard for several years now. I have seen its acceptance grow tremendously — to a point where I don't think it can be turned back. Does the Dvorak "need"

a newsletter? I don't think it does anymore, though there are a lot of people who need basic information about the Dvorak.

To supply the continuing demand for Dvorak information, Freelance Communications will continue to offer Dvorak products: my book *The Dvorak Keyboard* had its best sales year yet in 1988 and will continue to be "in print". Our PC conversion program PCKey, back issues of *DvDv* (including the newly announced compilation volume of *all* the back issues of *DvDv* — see the order form), copies of various reports and research papers, and, until our very limited stock runs out, autographed copies of Dr. Dvorak's book *Typewriting Behavior* will all be available. Of course, I will also be available for consulting services on a per-hour basis.

Seeing the Dvorak grow greatly in popularity and acceptance — and editing and designing the newsletter — has been extremely satisfying. I would like to thank the many people who made it possible by subscribing and contributing.

The Last Issue

DvDv's last issue will come off the press this summer, and it will be the largest issue we've ever published. It will report on the current status of the Dvorak, and will include a couple of *very* interesting articles — including one written by a successful novelist who uses the Dvorak.

Paid subscribers will also receive the most recent update of our "Product List" with their last issue. The list includes all of the products which have been detailed in these pages which support the Dvorak. And although the newsletter won't be continuing, the Product List will — it will be updated regularly and available for \$1 (to cover printing and postage costs).

Dr. Dvorak's Study

As you may have noticed, all of the advertising has been pulled out of this issue to save space, so I'll take a little space here to mention that we still have some copies of Dr. Dvorak's book, *Typewriting Behavior*, and

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Letters

Setting the Record Straight

The article "Remembering Dr. Dvorak" (Summer 1988), sent to you by Mary McKernan, did not have the professional material to which readers of *Dvorak Developments* have become accustomed.

Under my name, Ms. McKernan wrote "Hermione Dvorak recalls" that over our years of marriage, August suffered from "deep depression", etc. There is no truth in that entire paragraph. Its content is ridiculous. I said nothing of the kind. In complete contrast, August was optimistic and experienced one success after another. He planned ahead and worked hard.

I gave Ms. McKernan a short direct quotation from August. August said: "The Simplified typewriter keyboard is my gift to American education." She used it in a different way. Neither he nor I used the word "nice".

Hermione Dvorak
Seattle, WA

I agree that "deep depression" was an unfortunate choice of words which, on reflection, I should have edited, but I don't think that readers will construe them to mean that Dr. Dvorak was suffering from any medical or mental condition. Rather, it showed that a man with an obviously superior innovation still felt frustration — to me, that shows him to be a normal human. I apologize if you were misquoted — I want the record to be straight.

Same Story, Different Impression

I thought the interview Mrs. Dvorak gave provided one of the most interesting and appropriate cover stories to appear in *Dvorak Developments*. No one, I'm sure, who read it could be anything but impressed by Dr. Dvorak's fortitude, faced by the wretched blockades of war and legendary human inertia. I hope Mrs. Dvorak, whose own support must have been crucial to her husband, will consider giving other interviews from time to time. They surely furnish a most valuable direct link to a man whose careful studies and shining invention have improved the lot of everyone they've touched.

Christopher Ross
Victoria, British Columbia

Last Issue Letters

You are especially invited to submit a "Letter to the Editor" to be published in an expanded Letters section in the next issue. Letters should be addressed to Randy Cassingham, Editor, *Dvorak Developments*, PO Box 1895, Upland CA 91785. While not all letters can be personally answered, the most interesting will be printed here after editing for length and clarity.



The Dvorak (pronounced "duh-VOR-ack") Keyboard Diagram © 1989 by *Dvorak Developments*

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The Editor's Column

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many are *autographed* by Dr. Dvorak. If you are especially interested in the Dvorak, its history, and the ergonomic and language considerations behind the Dvorak layout's design, you should get a copy of this book. But if you want one, you need to hurry — we have less than 10 copies left. Write for a list of inscriptions. Prices range from \$50-85.

Questions, Questions

In the last issue, I started putting into print the answers to some of the more common questions people ask me about the Dvorak keyboard. Tying in to the words above, an obvious question is Why now? The Dvorak has been around since the 1930's, but only had grassroots support; so why are people in the mainstream "suddenly" getting interested in the Dvorak layout?

In my view, computers are responsible for the giant surge in interest in the Dvorak keyboard, and for two main reasons:

- Computers are, by their nature, easy to program, and
- People that didn't need to be able to type before are now suddenly expected to type on computers.

The biggest reason

Obviously computers are programmable; it's their nature. One of the biggest factors that has caused acceptance of the Dvorak is the ease in which a computer is converted. People don't want to spend hundreds of dollars for a new typewriter if they aren't completely convinced that they want to learn Dvorak. What if they don't like it? Then they have to spend more money to convert it back to Qwerty. But if a person could spend \$20-30 for a conversion program for a computer they already have, then the cost effectiveness and ease makes the Dvorak worth a try. Most people, once they've given the Dvorak a good try, don't want to go back.

A good keyboard conversion program makes it hard to tell that the keyboard wasn't actually a Dvorak keyboard to begin with. What's more, a good software conversion program is absurdly simple to install and, if necessary, to remove. Computer software conversions allow Qwerty and Dvorak typists to co-exist on the same machine with ease — put Dvorak on for the people that want it, take it off for people who don't.

There are Dvorak products available to convert almost all computers, including Apples (both IIs and Macs), Commodores, IBMs, older CP/M-based micros, and for terminals on minis and mainframes.

New typists

The other major factor is professionals. Most white collar workers in the past had secretaries to do the "dirty work" of typing. Now, these same managers have computers on their desks for spreadsheets, electronic mail, and other daily tasks. Most of these workers don't know how to type, or just have a passing

Why now? The Dvorak has been around since the 1930's, but only had grassroots support; so why are people in the mainstream "suddenly" getting interested in the Dvorak layout?

knowledge of typing from a high school class many years ago.

These workers need to learn how to type, but they don't have the time to learn Qwerty. And they don't want the agony of learning Qwerty (we all remember high school typing class). They are looking for an easier way out, and when they find out about the Dvorak, they want to try it. (Or, as I have often found, many have been aware of the Dvorak for some time, and convert when they realize they must learn to type.) On the Dvorak, the average person can learn the keyboard in just a couple of days, type well in a few weeks, and do it with ease.

The obvious question now, of course, is how many have taken the plunge. In the next and last issue of *Dvorak Developments*, I'll tackle this, one of the most complex Dvorak questions: **How many people use the Dvorak keyboard?**

Product Alerts

Trask Office Systems, 31 Maple Street, Brandon VT 05733, (802) 773-3376, has for years been custom-converting typewriters to Dvorak, specializing in IBM Selectrics. Recently, they've starting converting brand new Olympia typewriters, including various portable models (such as the XL501 and XL505). Prices range from about \$300 for the portables to about \$600 for office models. They will also do custom keyboard programming on the Olympias, including the Dvorak one-hand layouts. Trask is the only source we know of for new portable Dvorak machines and typewriters with Dvorak one-hand layouts.

Back Issues

- **Winter 1987.** DvDv Celebrates its 50th Issue. Randy Cassingham's column on PCKey conversion program. Product overview of Sure-Stroke/Dvorak (conversion/tutorial package for IBM PCs). Listing of one new Dvorak product.
- **Spring 1988.** Description of the process of 'diffusion' which innovations (like the Dvorak keyboard) must go through before being adopted. Randy Cassingham's column on Dvorak filters in MS-DOS and WordPerfect, and the illustrated entries on the Dvorak in the new Random House dictionary. Product overview on MacQwerty. 2 bibliographic entries. Listing of two new Dvorak products.

List of Dvorak Products Coming

Hold on — the list of Dvorak products from the "Product Alert" mentions in *Dvorak Developments* is being updated *again!* But don't send for one yet: a copy will be included with the last issue when it comes out. The list also outlines all of the available back issues of the newsletter. And don't worry: we will continue to update the list as we find out about Dvorak products. Whenever you need an update, send your address and \$1 (to help cover printing and postage) to Dvorak Products, PO Box 1895, Upland CA 91785.

- **Summer 1988.** A writer looks back on interviewing Dr. Dvorak for a magazine article. Randy Cassingham's column on why speech recognition won't replace the Dvorak anytime soon, and why there are blank keys on the ANSI layout diagrams. Virginia Russell on the re-approval of the ANSI Dvorak standard. Product overview on Tri-Mike's "Dvorak Keyboard System". 3 bibliographic entries. Listing of two new Dvorak products.

Back issues are \$2 each, postage included. All issues listed are eight pages. Order from Freelance Communications, PO Box 1895, Upland CA 91785. Send a stamp for information about earlier issues. And see the order form: we'll soon be issuing a compilation of *all* back issues in a single bound volume.

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